

## ARE MARINES A BETTER FIT FOR AFGHANISTAN?

BY

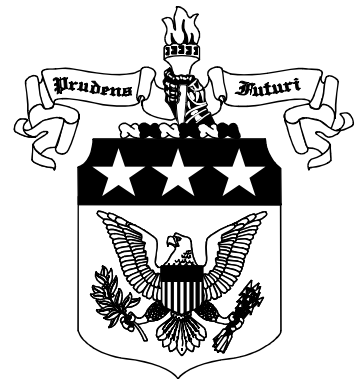
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ARE MARINES A BETTER FIT FOR AFGHANISTAN?**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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In October 2007, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Conway, proposed to the new Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that his Marines take a larger role in the counterinsurgency fight in Afghanistan. This plan, leaked to the *New York Times*, immediately drew criticism from those who characterized the plan as a “power grab.” Within weeks, retired general officers, generals “who spoke on condition of anonymity,” and others who viewed the proposal through the lens of perceived service equities generated a list of reasons why the plan should be rejected. This clouded the issue for Defense Department decision makers. Instead, had these same pundits closely examined the mission and the requirements, applied the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability (FAS) test, and eliminated arguments which were based on service parochialism, the U.S. may have saved months in implementing this simple plan to achieve our Nation’s goals. This paper briefly details the history of the issue, spells out the proposal, and applies the FAS check. The aim of this paper is to illustrate how quickly “the simplest thing becomes difficult” and present a methodology to apply to future decision making where service interests cloud the issue.



## ARE MARINES A BETTER FIT FOR AFGHANISTAN?

“Marine Corps thinkers,” to some, these terms do not go together. To others, like Lt Gen (Ret) Victor Krulak, the United States Marine Corps is characterized as thinkers, innovators, improvisers, penny pinchers, brothers, and fighters.<sup>1</sup> In early October 2007, these thinkers and innovators unveiled their latest plan to senior Defense Department leaders during a closed-door meeting between the Secretary of Defense, his staff, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>2</sup> By 11 October, word of this close-hold proposal leaked to *New York Times* author Thomas Shanker. He brought their idea to the public, stating the Marine Corps was “pressing to remove forces from Iraq and to send Marines instead to Afghanistan, to take over the leading role in combat there.”<sup>3</sup> Was this as straightforward as it seemed? The remainder of this paper will examine exactly that. The result will serve as a case study on how senior leaders can evaluate sound strategic proposals using the feasible, acceptable, and suitable (FAS) test and how, in some cases, service-centric parochial views and a few vocal critics can attempt to obscure a clear solution.

Within days of Shanker’s article, the roller coaster of public discourse began. Everyone from individual Marines to the leadership of the House Armed Service Committee (HASC) had an opinion. What Marines had heard through informal channels as early as July of 2006, was now being publicly and officially espoused by the Commandant, General James T. Conway. The Commandant’s commitment to his thinkers and innovators showed as he briefed the idea at the highest levels and even reiterated it in front of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment at Camp Pendleton, California. Although no decision had been made by the Secretary of Defense, Conway made his case to the regiment as they started their pre-deployment training.<sup>4</sup>



His proposal to give Marines the leading role in Afghanistan seemed simple, non-parochial, and motivated by three things: a desire to defeat the Taleban counter-insurgency; consolidate the gains in the Anbar province of Iraq; and reduce the stress on the U.S. Army. Regardless of its apparent simplicity, the idea quickly met skepticism in Washington. Former military personnel and “senior defense officials who requested anonymity” criticized the plan as a thinly veiled ploy to upstage the other services and “get while the getting was good” with regard to the unpopular conflict in Iraq. Controversy, public debate, and posturing raged throughout the fall. All the while, General Conway’s staff continued to socialize their idea and refine the plan set out in October. In early December 2007, Secretary of Defense Richard Gates offered a stinging rebuke when asked his opinion.<sup>5</sup> He stated “if it happens, it will be long after I’m Secretary of Defense.” He seemed to have made up his mind. Or had he?

By 11 December, Gates was facing increasing criticism of both U.S. operations and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan. While “the Awakening” was producing record drops in violence throughout al Anbar province in Iraq, the coalition was taking record casualties in Afghanistan. A Taleban resurgence primarily in the south of the country meant coalition forces were having significant difficulties in holding ground. In the land force construct of seize-hold-transfer, Regional Command South (RC-South) faced challenges across its entire area of operations. ISAF leadership and RC-South commanders needed more forces. These commanders asked for troops and their enablers such as intelligence capabilities, combat information systems, and helicopters. Gates faced Congress about these needs and the shortfalls produced when NATO donor nations failed to meet their previous

commitments to provide more forces.<sup>6</sup> Leaders of the HASC acknowledged Gate's predicament, but strongly recommended he not fill NATO's shortfalls with the tempting Marine proposal. The secretary would need to go talk to NATO leadership in person. As he readied for testimony and the trip to Europe, Gates was once again asked about the Marine Corps' proposal. In a public gathering at the Navy Annex, he acknowledged the idea as it related to NATO's shortcomings and suggested to this small gathering that a decision might be made after his trip to visit NATO leadership in Scotland.<sup>7</sup> Publicly, Gates had stepped back from his earlier rebuff of the idea saying he had not been presented anything on the "suggestion." This seemed to give General Conway maneuver room to publicly regroup and get back to Gates with more justification.<sup>8</sup>

By January 2008, the plan that started out stillborn began to pick up momentum. Secretary Gates returned from NATO with few commitments. Instead of additional forces, coalition stalwarts like Canada declared they would remove their forces from Afghanistan if other NATO countries failed to meet their earlier pledges. Gates had little choice. Shortly after the Army-Marine Corps Warfighter Talks, word spread of the approved deployment of 3,200 Marines to Afghanistan. A far cry from the "lead" role envisioned in October, this Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) plus an infantry battalion would serve in a variety of roles in the lead-up to the traditional "fighting season." By late 2008, this force will probably develop into a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) if the Marine Corps thinkers get their way.

Surprisingly, much of the criticism has died down since October. Where did the pundits go? Where are the arguments from parochial interest groups now? Has inertia overtaken force employment concerns? To reach a conclusion, one must start by

examining the U.S. and coalition mission in Afghanistan and by recognizing the capabilities required to achieve them. Next, decision makers must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of changing the *status quo*. Along the way, they must evaluate the points of their critics. Have the critics considered the proposal thoughtfully or has the lens of their service's equities colored their perception? Are the criticisms logical and valid? If so, have they been addressed or mitigated. Through this process, senior leaders arrive at the best answers to the Nation's strategic challenges. Applying this simple process to the Marine Corps role in Afghanistan, the road starts with what the Nation needs the military to accomplish.

#### What is the Mission and What Capabilities are Required?

What is the U.S. and ISAF mission in Afghanistan? Admiral Fallon, the Commander of U.S. Central Command told Congress, "While continuing to counter the insurgent threat militarily, we will work with other agencies and a broadly based international effort to assist the Afghans to expand governance and promote economic development."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, ISAF's stated mission is to assist the Afghan Government in "extending and exercising its authority and influence across the country, creating the conditions for stabilisation and reconstruction."<sup>10</sup> Fallon and the ISAF commander's focus have remained on these two approaches when allocating capabilities and manpower throughout Afghanistan. One former commander of RC-South, Dutch Major General van Loon, further clarified the coalition's mindset when he said, "fighting the Taliban without reconstruction is futile, reconstruction without fighting the Taliban is impossible."<sup>11</sup>

In terms of countering the insurgent threat, van Loon noted that defeating the Taliban was easier than rebuilding Afghanistan. He and other former commanders seemed to agree ISAF and U.S. forces could seize and hold areas almost at will. However, many acknowledged that insurgent fighters quickly filled the vacuum in these areas in RC-South when coalition forces returned for their forward operating bases. Thus, what commanders in the south lacked was the capability to seize and hold key terrain, then transfer it to the Afghan National Army (ANA). In fact, they needed to be able to accomplish each of the “Successful Practices” from the Army and Marine Corps’ recently released Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgencies* (see Figure 1).

| <b><i>Successful practices</i></b>   | <b><i>Unsuccessful practices</i></b>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize intelligence</li> <li>• Focus on the population, its needs, and its security.</li> <li>• Establish and expand secure areas.</li> <li>• Isolate insurgents from the populace (population control).</li> <li>• Conduct effective, pervasive, and continuous information operations.</li> <li>• Provide amnesty and rehabilitation for those willing to support the new government</li> <li>• Place host-nation police in the lead with military support as soon as the security situation permits.</li> <li>• Expand and diversify the host-nation police force.</li> <li>• Train military forces to conduct counterinsurgency operations.</li> <li>• Embed quality advisors and special forces with host-nation forces.</li> <li>• Deny sanctuary to insurgents.</li> <li>• Encourage strong political and military cooperation and information sharing</li> <li>• Secure host-nation borders.</li> <li>• Protect key infrastructure.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overemphasize killing and capturing the enemy rather than securing and engaging the populace</li> <li>• Conduct large-scale operations as the norm.</li> <li>• Concentrate military forces in large bases for protection.</li> <li>• Focus special forces primarily on raiding</li> <li>• Place low priority on assigning quality advisors to host-nation forces.</li> <li>• Build and train host-nation security forces in the U.S. military's image.</li> <li>• Ignore peacetime government processes, including legal procedures.</li> <li>• Allow open borders, airspace, and coastlines.</li> </ul> |

Figure 1: Successful/Unsuccessful Practices in Counterinsurgencies from FM 3-24.

For land forces, commanders only had some of the necessary enablers required to seize and hold key terrain. They explained they “always had air (assets), even at the battalion level, they just had to figure out what to do with them.” For the persistent counterinsurgency capability, leaders like van Loon stated they needed more police training teams and Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLTs), more full-motion video capabilities, and more battlefield mobility assets.<sup>12</sup> Unofficially, another senior American general formerly in ISAF leadership identified his biggest shortfalls in Afghanistan as trainers, helicopters, and civil affairs teams. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen admitted, “McNeill (ISAF Commander) and Fallon just want one more battalion for training teams.”<sup>13</sup>

In order to transfer key terrain, American forces had to train the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP). Working side-by-side with them in offensive operations since 2001, military teams have worked to build the new ANA. According to the USCENTCOM commander, ANA’s “35,000 soldiers enjoy a high-level of support from the populace, and are growing steadily in competence, effectiveness, and professionalism.”<sup>14</sup> But in 2007 the fact remained, the ANA was only at 50% strength after six years. The 46,000 officers of the ANP and Border Patrol were even further behind. Thus, countering the insurgency will require the enablers mentioned above plus a significant addition to coalition training teams.

In terms of focusing on the population’s needs, the U.S./ISAF mission has similar challenges. Stabilization and reconstruction programs led by the Afghan Engineer Division of the Army’s Corps of Engineers has awarded nearly \$3.5B in construction contracts supporting Afghan security forces, counter narcotics, and U.S./coalition force

projection. Further, since 2002, U.S. forces, manning 25 Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), have directly constructed or overseen organic military construction projects and employed as many as 16,000 Afghans to complete projects in their own regions.<sup>15</sup> More teams, more mobility, and more training are all required if the coalition hopes to “expand governance and promote economic development” to a point where NATO forces can reduce its footprint. Figure 2 sums up the two distinct but interdependent missions, the capabilities required, and the shortfalls of the situation military planners attempted to mitigate in 2007.

|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Mission (U.S./ ISAF)</b> | Countering the insurgency   | Working with others to expand Afghan governance and promote economic development   |
| <b>Capability Required</b>  | Ability to seize-hold-transfer key terrain to ANA/ANP   | Ability to set the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction   |
| <b>Shortfall</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Enablers”</li> <li>- Battlefield mobility (helicopters)</li> <li>- Full motion video</li> <li>- ANA OMLTs/ANP training teams</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More PRTs</li> <li>- Security situation stable enough to increase non-governmental/ international organization operations</li> <li>- Indigenous Afghani employment</li> </ul> |

Figure 2: Capabilities/Shortfalls of the two distinct missions in Afghanistan.

#### Versus The Status Quo – Feasible?

Having established the role of military forces in Afghanistan and identifying the current shortfalls, decision makers must examine the feasibility of a change from the *status quo* and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a proposal.

Beginning with the proposal, one must first ascertain if the Marine Corps can feasibly handle the mission—in other words can they execute the counterinsurgency fight and the related tasks in Afghanistan? Although a near presumption, it is always a dangerous position to assume Marines will be successful in the future just because they have been successful in the past. Times and conditions change. A quick examination of

more than a few events evaluated against FM 3-24's successful practices aids the reader in determining the feasibility of the plan.

First, does the Marine Corps have the manpower to devote to an increased presence in Afghanistan? According to Headquarters Marine Corps their idea was to start with a MEU plus a battalion and grow to a MEB as more forces become available. Since a MEU is underway in the region anyway this plan costs the service one extra battalion and does not increase their seven-month on/seven month "home" rotation policy. The thinkers designed this proposal to not be dependent on a draw down in Iraq but admitted it does limit U.S. flexible response to other regional hotspots (Kenya, Chad, Sudan, etc.). If there is a draw down in Iraq beyond the two battalions scheduled to come out in Spring 2008 or conditions in al Anbar reach a point in late 2008 where control can be handed over to Iraqi forces, planners already have ideas for the Marines that would be freed up.<sup>16</sup> Obviously, some capabilities could be shifted to other areas within Iraq. The remainder of the gain could be used to fill out the MEB in Afghanistan, return a MEU to shipborne duty, and, depending on the numbers, "at home" time could be lengthened in order to reset the force. None of these plans put additional burden on the other services. Thus, it is feasible the Marine Corps can man their current proposal effectively.

Second, can the Marines execute the counterinsurgency tasks and fill the shortfalls identified? Looking at history proves instructive. "Instant readiness" as described by former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General John Lejeune, gave Marines ample opportunities to become the "masters of counterinsurgency." Since the Spanish-American War, Marines have gone beyond simple seizures or protection

missions and executed a number of long-term occupations. Although not always enamored with the counterinsurgency mission, they have continually honed their experience in security operations and developed new “nation-building” capabilities.<sup>17</sup> Beginning with the *Small Wars Manual* of 1940 to the 2006 version of Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Marines have captured these lessons and codified their experiences along the way.

Some of these historical examples approximate the tasks required in Afghanistan today—counter the insurgency and set the conditions for expanded governance and economic development. For instance, in the 1899 Philippines campaign, Marines “took control of Olongapo and became involved with the military pacification of Luzon.” There they faced a counterinsurgency campaign versus the expected peaceful occupation. They conducted their normal military missions of chasing anti-U.S. guerillas or *ladrones* while also ensuring elections were held, taxes collected, rice and supplies flowed, public works projects supervised, and that the region was gradually stabilized.<sup>18</sup> Next, Marines tackled a counterinsurgency in Haiti. In addition to their military work there, Marines were given high marks in 1916 for setting conditions for expanded governance and economic development. The Episcopal Bishop of Haiti summarized their contributions saying:

The reconstruction work of the United States Marine in Haiti provides one of the most thrilling and gratifying chapters in contemporaneous American history...The Marines have literally taught the Haitians how to live decently. Before their coming, sanitation, save in the crudest and most unsatisfactory forms, was unknown; fevers and epidemics were as plentiful as revolutions, a press gang was in vogue and the country was the victim of continuous uprisings engineered by political scoundrels, each of whom ravaged the customs money drawer as each in turn came into short-lived power. The entry of the U.S. Marines ended this sorry story.<sup>19</sup>



A key element in consolidating counterinsurgency gains, is training host nation forces. Marines started this role in the Samoas after their experience in the Philippines. First, they trained native security forces to protect their new naval station on the protectorate.<sup>20</sup> Then the “banana wars” in the Caribbean challenged them to expand their role not only in training base defense forces, but legitimate host nation forces capable of providing security for entire nations. Looking at Haiti again, Marines there landed, fought the local guerillas, and garrisoned 16 towns. To solidify their gains, they abolished the “inefficient Haitian Army” and consolidated the five Haitian police forces into a single national constabulary. Starting with 500 local policemen, Marines raised 115 American officers, and 2533 Haitian enlisted men to man the *Gendarmie d’Haiti*.<sup>21</sup> After training the Haitians in routine police patrols, law enforcement, and marksmanship, the Marines found the *Gendarmie* were willing to skirmish with the guerillas, conduct routine patrols, and all tasks required to provide local security. Under Marine supervision, Haitians ran the national penitentiary and local jails and linked their posts with telegraphs. Marines even supervised local sanitation, communications, and public works programs. In the next year, a similar host-nation training program was put into action by the Marines in the occupied Dominican Republic. There, like Haiti and similar to the requirements of Afghanistan, U.S. forces fought anti-government insurgents, garrisoned villages, and established the local guard force.<sup>22</sup>

Two key counterinsurgency tasks Marines have historically conducted are security for the local populace and protection for key infrastructure. Depending on which part of Afghanistan they are assigned, Marines may be tapped to protect Helmand villages and secure infrastructure like Highway 1 or the \$200 million dam in Kajaki. Their Combined

Action Platoons in Vietnam illustrate their historical performance in this first role perfectly. British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson said, "Of all the United States forces [in Vietnam] the Marine Corps alone made a serious attempt to achieve permanent and lasting results...by seeking to protect the rural population." The Combined Action Platoons provided immediate security for a hamlet, trained Popular Forces as an enduring force, started and supervised public works, and delivered humanitarian aid.<sup>23</sup> Although the program was disbanded after only a few years, the Marine program provided valuable intelligence, a thorough knowledge of the area and its people, and greater security coverage for the population than U.S. troops alone could provide.<sup>24</sup> Lastly, Marines began their history of protecting key infrastructure of host nations when they garrisoned 24 Cuban locations and guarded railroads, ports, and plantations in 1906. By 1912 Marines returned to Cuba after a revolt, occupying 26 towns and guaranteeing the safety for every train on the eastern half of the island.<sup>25</sup> In the last half of the century, Marines went ashore "amid soft drink vendors and bathers" to discourage a rebel coup, secure the Beirut airport, and protect the oil pipelines in Lebanon.<sup>26</sup> In the initial stages of Operation Restore Hope, they occupied the U.S. embassy, port, and airfield in Mogadishu.<sup>27</sup> And later in Operation Restore/Uphold Democracy, they were charged with securing a beach, the port and airfield at Cap-Haitien and holding the north of the country until relieved by the U.S. Army.<sup>28</sup>

The Philippines, six different interventions in the "Banana Wars," China, Vietnam, and other examples from the *Small Wars Manual* provide the reader with solid historical cases to examine Marine Corps performance in counterinsurgencies.<sup>29</sup> Recently, they reinforced this record with their performance in Iraq. In Multi-National Forces West

(MND-West), Marines, both alone, and now with their Iraqi partners have implemented many of their historical practices. Like the Dominican Republic, they are training the police in Fallujah. Like Haiti and the Philippines, they have provided sanitation and public works in Ramadi. Like Beirut and Cuba, they have protected infrastructure such as the Haditha Dam and even a high-value tactical convoy transporting a 700-ton “Mother of All Generators” across al Anbar at 5 miles per hour.<sup>30</sup> In sum, Marines have continued to show they can feasibly man the mission and, with their Joint Force enablers, execute FM 3-24’s successful counterinsurgency practices.

#### Versus The Status Quo – Acceptable?

Presented with a feasible proposal by the Marine Corps, senior leaders must check to see if it is acceptable and suitable. To accomplish this, leaders begin by categorizing the aspects of the plan into advantages and disadvantages, culling out aspects which are merely distracters. Much of the public discourse in Fall 2007 clouded this process. On one hand, critics focused on the motivations behind the Marine Corps proposal rather than actual disadvantages. On the other hand, the Commandant and his allies devoted most of their discussion to parrying the critics rather than selling the advantages of their plan. Where would Department of Defense (DoD) decision makers start?

As the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen was confirmed, he was greeted with this controversial initiative. Along with the relatively new Secretary of Defense, Mullen would have to weigh Conway’s ideas and sift through a variety of opinions from external writers, retired pundits, and internal DoD staff, to separate the “wheat from the chaff.” In the weeks following the *New York Times* article,

authors would speculate why the Marines would propose such a plan and why the Marine option would not be successful in Afghanistan. In true inter-service rivalry fashion, an article in an October *Army Times* issue, laid out at least five reasons why this proposal would not “go down well with the Army.” For its mostly Army readership, the article went further, quoting a Joint Staff general as saying the issue “is going to be more contentious and sensitive than many people outside of the inside team realize.”<sup>31</sup>

For the Marine Corps’ part, Conway and his thinkers were in a tough spot. Hamstrung by the need to fall-in behind Secretary Gates’ rebuke, yet still believing Conway’s plan was a sound way ahead, the plan’s proponents could do little more than rebuff the critics. Since Fall 2006, Conway had been developing “what was next” in the Global War on Terror. The Commandant saw the role in Anbar waning and consequently, an impending draw down there. Once that happened, the U.S. would have one “shooting war” going on (in Afghanistan). That conflict would mainly involve the Army, Air Force, Special Operations, and PRTs. As one of Conway’s planners mentioned, Marines on the sidelines when America had a shooting war going on was anathema to the Commandant.<sup>32</sup> Conway believed his plan could help his Corps as well as the Army. For the Marines in Iraq, he saw them as getting too “heavy.”<sup>33</sup> A growing dependency on mounted operations versus the traditional dismounted role of the Marines irked Conway. Moving operations to Afghanistan would get Marines back to their nature of quick, light, dismounted operations.<sup>34</sup> Conway envisioned a reduction from the 26,000-man force in Iraq to a 15,000-man force in Afghanistan. This load would allow Marines to rotate 7 months on/14 months at home. This model would allow his force to reset and reduce the current “risk of not doing other things that are core

competencies like amphibious operations, cold weather training, mountain training, training in the jungles.”<sup>35</sup> He also believed the Marine contribution could ease the strain on the Army. In December, the Army’s Chief of Staff called their current pace in Iraq and Afghanistan “unsustainable” and admitted they would need to work toward 18 months between deployments rather than 12 if they wanted to train for “the full spectrum of combat.”<sup>36</sup> For General Conway, this plan was a “no-brainer” full of benefits for his and other services, and for the Nation. As expected, others with equities and supporters did not see it as so straightforward.

Politically, critics accused the Marine Corps first and foremost of wanting to “get while the getting was good” with regard to Iraq.<sup>37</sup> Pundits suggested Marines wanted to distance themselves from the increasingly unpopular counterinsurgency in Iraq and leave it to the Army. Anecdotally, many of these same critics may have also feared the Marines would be as successful in Afghanistan as they had been in al Anbar. To them, this would leave no doubt which land force was the master of counterinsurgency.<sup>38</sup> This fear can still be heard even after the proposal has clearly been described as additive to Army forces in Afghanistan versus the rumored swap as initially reported. With this claim is the fear resources will be stripped from the Army. Unfortunately, it fails the “long view” look which questions, if the Marine Corps is so self-centered, why would they sign up for a mission which seems to be much more enduring than Iraq and will tax the resources of the Marine Corps for many years to come? It also ignores the strategic rewards to both services of committing more resources to Afghanistan and finishing the mission quicker. General Conway convincingly makes the case for solving these U.S.

challenges (Iraq and Afghanistan) as quickly as possible in order to reset for future missions.

In terms of personnel, skeptics suggested Marines developed the plan in order to justify more manpower authorizations in the event the upcoming administration draws down forces in Iraq. Without much specificity, General Conway agreed the dollar costs of 202,000 Marines were high, but acceptable given the “need for a rotational base to support a future conflict, a new maritime strategy, and some other duties.”<sup>39</sup> Few would argue current tensions with Iran, stopping the genocide in Sudan, and the upheaval in Chad and Kenya point to a need to reduce ready American forces. Rather, most agree the U.S. needs more available troops. More criticisms on manning imply the plan is a means to access another four-star billet once General McNeill departs as the commander of ISAF.<sup>40</sup> Conway tackled this assertion in a November visit to Camp Pendleton saying, “nothing could be further from the truth.” He illustrated the logic flaw of the charge by pointing out that “after a year, I wouldn’t have a job for that guy” inferring the post would be a dead-end for any Marine four-star.<sup>41</sup> Other critics charge Marines with only wanting to get engaged in Afghanistan because it is the “only shooting war” and would be good for recruiting. When asked about Marines moving to the hot war, Conway tells the anecdote of the lance corporal in Iraq complaining of not having anyone to shoot. But he quickly points out Marine recruiting was successful prior to 2001. Since Marines recruit “to a different objective and probably recruit a slightly different population (than the other services)” he sees no problems with or without an increase in participation in Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup>

With regard to equipment, detractors saw the plan as a way for the Marine Corps to validate their new V-22 and increase overall procurement. While Afghanistan would be another valuable test for this new multi-service capability, HMM-263 at Al Asad Airbase in Iraq has successfully put the V-22 through its paces in 2007. Success in that active combat AO would serve the same purpose as the critics contend. An active duty general with recent Afghanistan experience also characterized the Marine helicopter forces as “not geared for success.” Specific charges of the CH-46 not being as strong as its Army equivalent, the CH-47, show the non-sensical nature of this argument, as the Marine Corps uses the CH-53 as their heavy hauler.<sup>43</sup>

For employment, pundits saw two issues. First, a retired general commented, “Marines rotate every seven months, that’s extraordinarily disruptive in a counterinsurgency campaign.”<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, this argument ignores the counterinsurgency successes in Anbar and fails to recognize the fact that in a long war, returning every seven months may produce more continuity than those leaving for a year or more. Employment critics suggested the Marine Corps wanted to put to rest any doubts about the utility of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and its ability to tackle this role. They went on to imply, a validation would result in a loss of resources by the U.S. Air Force in attack assets and the U.S. Army in terms of logistics programs. A retired Army general flatly stated “there are some extraordinarily obvious flaws in this. Marines don’t bring any of the infrastructure logistics, aviation, all of the other enablers that are necessary to fight in this environment successfully.”<sup>45</sup> Examining this charge closely, with regard to airpower, Marine planners foresee the MAGTF’s air element as having between six and nine AV-8 Harriers, KC-130 air refuelers, and both attack and

lift helicopters. While this contribution will increase mobility and localized firepower in RC-South, it does not challenge the countrywide contributions made by bomber, fighter, air refueling, electronic warfare, ISR, tactical airlift, and special operations airpower currently being employed by the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC). Although the MAGTF and CFACC will have to work out the details on battlespace geometry and the employment of airpower, Marine aviation will compliment rather than challenge U.S. Air Force warfighting in Afghanistan. With regard to the assertion a “validated” MAGTF will challenge Army logistics equities, no charge could be more groundless. Under doctrine, Army forces are responsible for the logistics for such long-term operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAI FREEDOM. Whether Marines operate in Anbar or in Helmand in RC-South, Army logistics professionals will have to meet their needs. For the Marine Corps equity, Conway has already stated his desire to be “lighter.” His MEBs are self-sustaining for roughly 30 days and his MEUs 15 days. No critic or proponent suggest the operations will be over that quickly, thus Army support will be required.

Further employment concerns revolved around the perception the Marine Corps role in Iraq was making them too “heavy.” Approximating the “heavy” U.S. Army would put the Marine Corps in direct competition with “the other” land force. Marines were accused of wanting to avoid future resource competitions with the Army by staking claim to counterinsurgencies as their niche rather than their traditional yet less probable role as an amphibious operations force. The facts and figures of defense budgets and defense language show Congress has not taken either of these arguments seriously. Lastly with regards to employment, skeptics claim the proposal of the Marines, a single



service, taking the lead counters the theme of “jointness” built by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. These critics fail to admit a “single service” is in the lead right now and the initial proposal merely supplants one land component for another. As the plan has evolved into a MEU plus a battalion and is additive, U.S. forces actually have increased their “jointness.” Additionally, this plan exposes Marines to NATO operations on a much grander scale than in their history. They will benefit from the same kind of coalition exposure as the Army has gained in the Balkans.<sup>46</sup>

Important to the acceptability test is the actual measurement of advantages versus their costs. The paragraphs above merely scratch the surface of issues that need to be considered. A few points staffs need clarity on are:

- What is the impact on Army manpower? Does Army unity of command in Iraq, a single-service logistics distribution system in the Iraqi AO, and a single country focused training/spin-up program (Arabic language vs Arabic and Pashto, urban warfare vs urban and mountainous, etc.) create manpower savings?
- What are the mobility requirements to put a MEU plus a battalion/a MEB into Afghanistan and/or redeploy a 15,000-soldier Army contingent? What additional equipment would the MAGTF need?

After examining the advantages, disadvantages, and weighing the criticisms, decision makers looking at the acceptability of the Marine Corps plan should find few objections. For the most part, service equities are affected little. While significant operational and tactical-level details still loom, the strategic benefits of adding the MAGTF to Afghanistan are considerable. The last step for senior leaders is determining

if the proposal is suitable. In doctrinal terms, does the plan comply with any specified conditions already established?

### Versus The Status Quo – Suitable

Two specified conditions are worth noting when testing if the proposal is suitable. First, the overall military strategy must be considered. In October 2007, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff laid out his strategy with three priorities. He wants to: “(1) develop a military strategy tied to our national vital interests in the Middle East which includes Iraq and Afghanistan but looks beyond them as well; (2) reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our forces; and (3) properly balance global risk to help America maintain a position of leadership and preserve our freedom of action...”<sup>47</sup>

The second condition, rooted in the Chairman’s first priority, is how he sees the relationship between Iraq and Afghanistan and thus, how to allocate forces. In November 2007, Mullen said Afghanistan was “an economy of force operation.”<sup>48</sup> Part of his Joint Staff team went further saying, “we do what we can in Afghanistan; we do what we must in Iraq ... if we had these forces (additional Marines) readily available, we would have sent them to Afghanistan already.”<sup>49</sup> Has this current strategy produced the results America is looking for? A February 2008 Atlantic Council Report said, “Afghanistan will become a failed state unless urgent steps are taken to tackle worsening security.” A British charity warned of a looming humanitarian “disaster.” Did being treated as an “economy of force operation” cause this? What are the outcomes of continuing on this course? The same report shed some light on the answer. According to the Atlantic Council, “if Afghanistan fails, the possible strategic consequences will

worsen regional in stability and do great harm to the fight against Jihadism and religious extremism (worldwide).”<sup>50</sup>

So how does the Marine Corps proposal fit into these conditions? First, it acknowledges the importance of both of these AOs and links to a goal of winning in Iraq and Afghanistan in an efficient manner. It mitigates risk articulated by the Atlantic Council Report but accepts risk in the “full spectrum” readiness of the force in order to win today’s fights.<sup>51</sup> The plan infers quicker success due to the commitment of more resources, but acknowledges drawdowns in Iraq will benefit both services if forces are reallocated as proposed. Looking closely at the plan against Mullen’s third priority of managing global risk, senior leaders will find the biggest drawback. According to the National Security Strategy and all supporting strategies, the future is a world of hotspots, failed states, and terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction for years to come. The proposal will tie down a portion of the land forces of the Nation’s traditional quick reaction force until the missions are complete.<sup>52</sup> In the less probable scenario involving a conventional fight, senior leaders must accept the fact that our Nation’s full-spectrum capability diminishes every day the bulk of our military is employed in a counterinsurgency role. Faced with today’s reality of a resurgence of Taleban in Afghanistan and a need to hand over Iraqi security to Iraqi forces, this plan clearly passes the suitability test.

### Conclusion

General Conway’s proposal to move Marines into Afghanistan illustrates military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz’ adage, “everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.”<sup>53</sup> Conway thought he and his thinkers had developed a sound and

simple plan to exploit the strengths of both of America's land forces. He thought he had a new idea that would garner land force efficiencies by consolidating Marines in one AO and Army in another. Instead, critics claimed he was executing a sinister "power grab." "Socialized" outside of the Marine Corps by the *New York Times*, the Commandant's plan quickly changed from simple to difficult. Parochial backbiting and the "noise" of service posturing clouded the real merits of what Conway and his thinkers had put together for a new Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this type of environment, decision makers often have difficulty determining which really ARE arguments and which are NOT. They must strive to eliminate the distracting arguments generated by perceived threats to parochial interests.

Conway's simple plan seemed aimed at tackling a simple problem. What was the problem? What was the mission and what were the requirements? U.S. and ISAF commanders were clear. They had an "economy of force operation" with a two-part mission that continued to have unfilled troop requirements. What was his solution? Source this requirement with American Marines. Were there other options? Senior leaders could have chosen between maintaining *status quo*, sourcing the requirement from US military resources, or looking for more NATO support. Instead of taking Conway's proposal immediately and ignoring the historical probability of zero that NATO would bend to "hardball," U.S. decision makers wasted valuable months before finally arriving at the decision to send additional Marines to Afghanistan. Once the decision makers, determined they could not accept *status quo* and NATO would not provide more forces, General Conway's proposal began to look a lot more reasonable. After applying the FAS check it looked downright attractive. His plan would be executed by a

force feasibly manned to be able to do the job, with an historical track record of knowing how to do the job. The proposal looked acceptable in that its advantages far outweighed its disadvantages and the majority of criticisms could be deemed parochial posturing. It also passed as suitable since it complied with the conditions already set by the standing DoD guidance. Applying this FAS check in October, senior leaders could have rapidly seen the additive plan of a MEU plus a battalion a tremendous opportunity they should have seized immediately. This methodical review would have showed them where service insecurities generated arguments but realities illuminated strategic opportunities. In the end, the Nation has two strategic military challenges: (1) win two counterinsurgencies as soon as possible and (2) reset the military for tomorrow's hotspots while never losing sight of the possibility of a true conventional competitor. This latest proposal from the Marine Corps thinkers and innovators provided a feasible, acceptable, and suitable way to achieve both by aiming at strategic goals rather than allowing distracters to focus us on the short-term fight.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Krulak's categorizations are inferred in the titles of his chapters in Victor H. Krulak, Gen, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the Marine Corps*, New edition (April 1999) (U.S. Naval Institute).

<sup>2</sup> Thom Shanker, "Marines Press to Remove Their Forces from Iraq," *The New York Times*, 11 October 2007 [newspaper-online]; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/washington/11military.html>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Lisa Burgess, "Conway: Proposal to Move Marines Not a Power Grab," *Stars and Stripes*, November 2, 2007 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://www.ebird.afis.mil/ebfiels/e20071102557768.html>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2007.

<sup>5</sup> While appearing flippant, the response may actually be a realistic view of his own projected time in office coupled with a realistic view of how long the proposed swap will take. Since Secretary Gates may be replaced by an incoming administration in 2009, he may have

been suggesting the swap is not feasible until after that time. Jason Sherman, "Marines Still Preparing Proposal to Lead US Role in Afghanistan," *Inside the Army*, 3 December 2007 [journal-online]; available from <http://www.military-quotes.com/forum/marines-still-preparing-proposal-lead-t49188.html>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2007.

<sup>6</sup> These figures were derived from comments made during a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee on 11 December 2007. Among the promised troops that have yet to materialize were three infantry battalions, approx 3,000 police trainers and about 20 helicopters. "US Defense Secretary Gates in Scotland to hold talks with NATO allies on Afghanistan," 14 December 2007 Update by the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, available from <http://www.coe-dmha.org/Afghanistan/Afg12142007.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Telephone interview with Lt Col James Kendall, USMC, USMC PP&O, 11 Jan 08.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Flaherty, "Marine Commandant Says He Is Concerned Iraq is Turning Quick Response Force Into Another Army," *North County Times*, 15 October 2007 [newspaper-online]; available from [http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2007/10/17/military/14\\_44\\_6310\\_15\\_07.txt](http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2007/10/17/military/14_44_6310_15_07.txt); Internet; accessed 21 October 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Admiral William J. Fallon, *The Posture of the United States Central Command*, 2007 Posture Statement presented to the Senate Armed Services Committee of the 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: United States Central Command, 3 May 2007). The entirety of this 2007 Posture Statement is also available on CENTCOM's website at <http://www.centcom.mil/en/posture-statement/2.html>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2007.

<sup>10</sup> *The International Security Assistance Force Mission*, available from <http://www.nato.int/issues/isaf/index.html>; Internet; accessed 29 November 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Major General van Loon's comments from Commander Robert Howell, RN (retired), "Technology Transforms NATO Forces," *Signal*, December 2007 [journal-online]; available from [http://www.afcea.org/signal/articles/templates/SIGNAL\\_Article\\_Template.asp?articleid=1443&zoid=8](http://www.afcea.org/signal/articles/templates/SIGNAL_Article_Template.asp?articleid=1443&zoid=8); Internet; accessed 20 December 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Admiral Michael Mullen, lecture, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 28 November 2007, interview was on the record.

<sup>14</sup> Fallon.

<sup>15</sup> The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, "The GWOT Reconstruction Report: Supporting the Global War on Terror Through Reconstruction and Sustainment," Volume 1 Issue 7, October 18, 2007 [journal-online]; available from <http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/news/releases/GWOT-October.pdf>; Internet; accessed 1 November 2007.

<sup>16</sup> 5 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and 2 battalions added as part of the 'surge' were scheduled to leave Iraq in Spring 2008. As of this writing, the schedule is yet to be determined. Gen James T. Conway, "DoD News Briefing with Gen. Conway from the Pentagon Briefing

Room, Arlington, VA," 5 December 2007, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4101>; Internet; accessed 6 December 2007.

<sup>17</sup> "The Kennedy administration realized the future would be fraught with counterinsurgencies and believed he had to focus the Marine Corps on the challenge. With the exception of Victor Krulak, no senior Marine general embraced the (counterinsurgency) mission. Fleet Marine Force (FMF) training included counterinsurgency problems but paid little attention to the subtleties of population control, psychological-political action, civil affairs, and special operations in counterterrorism and raiding." Alan Millet, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the Marine Corps* (Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), 548.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Baltimore, Md.: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America), 119.

<sup>19</sup> Heinl, 180.

<sup>20</sup> "In 1904, military forces defeated natives on the joint British-American protectorate of Samoa and created a naval station there. Marine NCOs trained and commanded a native security force, the Fita-Fita Guard, which served proudly for many years." Heinl, 119.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the occupation in the Dominican Republic was not as successful as in Haiti and after 5 years, Wilson administration officials announced their plans to withdraw from the Dominican Republic. Marines and the *Guardia* launched one last effort to eliminate the guerillas before their withdrawal. In a series of raids, Marines would surround a town in the early morning; then a mounted company accompanied by Mexican and Puerto Rican Marines and *Guardia* would gallop into the village and question all the villagers. These final raids in 1922 screened more than 2000 people, holding about 500 for the provost courts. These last joint cordon operations and intense patrolling finally brought the campaign to an end. Millet, 196-202.

<sup>23</sup> Examples of Marine work was described in a variety of documents. The following is but one synopsis of the scope of the Civic Action Program's efforts. "Marine civic action included the provision of medical care for Vietnamese civilians. US Navy doctors and corpsmen working with the Marines provided over four million medical treatments and trained about 9,000 Vietnamese nationals in nursing-type skills. Marine helicopters and land vehicles evacuated 19,000 sick or injured civilians to civilian and US military treatment facilities. Marines assisted the Vietnamese in the construction of schools and additional classrooms. Thirteen million meals were provided to refugees, and over 400,000 pounds of clothing were distributed by Marines. Other aspects of civic action in the Marine area of responsibility included the construction of wells, bridge building, repair of irrigation facilities, animal husbandry projects and agricultural seed purchases, and the distribution of carpentry and blacksmith tools to the civilian population. Marine civic action was not limited to the utilization of military assets in Vietnam. Organized Marine Corps Reserve units in the United States also made significant contributions. Marine reserves spent \$80,000 on elementary school "kits" containing pencils, notebooks, erasers, scissors, and other essential school items. \$33,800 was spent on brick-making machines, \$7,200 on rice threshers, \$3,100 toward the construction of dams to increase agricultural production through irrigation, \$32,095 for civilian hospital construction, and over \$3,000 for the

purchase of water pumps to provide drinking water. Money from the Marine Corps Reserve Civic Action Fund also bought emergency food, toys for children, and supported the Vietnamese 4-T Program, an organization similar to the 4-H Program in the United States.” In order to illustrate CAP contributions, this except from “Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part II” was included in its entirety. As part of the larger collection, see other entries in the Peter Brush, Library Science at the University of Kentucky at [http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Texts/Scholarly/Brush\\_CAP\\_02.html#footnote%2028#footnote%2028](http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Texts/Scholarly/Brush_CAP_02.html#footnote%2028#footnote%2028); Internet; accessed 2 December 2007.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Southeast Asia Intelligence Division, *A Systems Analysis View of the Vietnam War 1965-1972 (Volume 10), Pacification and Civil Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: US Government, February, 1975).

<sup>25</sup> Heinl, 154.

<sup>26</sup> July 14, 1958. Millet, 540.

<sup>27</sup> Amphibious landing at Mogadishu, Somalia took place on 7 December 1992. Edwin H. Simmons, *United States Marines: A History, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 321.

<sup>28</sup> With the Army and Special Operations Command forces peaceably ashore in Port-Au-Prince Haiti on 19 September 1994, Marines were to hold the north of the country until relieved by the Army. After securing a beach, the port and airport at Cap-Haitien, Marines began their task of “helping the townspeople meet basic civic needs: Medical supplies, emergency food stocks, fuel for the electric power plant, and restoration of some semblance of sanitation.” Ibid, 327.

<sup>29</sup> *Small Wars Manual: United States Marine Corps 1940*, United States Government Printing (Washington, D.C., 1940). Available online from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/swm/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 20 October 2007.

<sup>30</sup> From personal experience, the entire joint team provided armed overwatch and painfully stood guard as the 1.5 megawatt, German-built generator lumbered from Jordan up to Kirkuk at 5 miles per hour. Transitting the Marine AO in Anbar was the time when most felt an attack was likely since it was the “hottest” insurgent area in Spring of 2005. The generator successfully made it to Kirkuk for installation in a new electrical plant 11 days after the trip commenced. Arthur Chrenkoff, “The Air of Freedom: A Roundup of the Past Two Weeks’ Good News From Iraq,” 25 April 2005, available from <http://opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110006601>; Internet; accessed 13 February 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Sean D. Naylor, “Generals slam Marine plan for Afghanistan,” *The Army Times*, October 14, 2007 [newspaper-online]; available from [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2007/10/Army\\_afghan\\_react\\_071011w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2007/10/Army_afghan_react_071011w/); Internet; accessed on 14 October 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Lt Col James Kendall, U.S. Marine Corps Plans and Programs Office, telephone interview by the author, 11 Jan 08.



<sup>33</sup> Lolita C. Baldor, "Marines Cut Armored Vehicle Orders," *The Washington Post*, 30 November 2007 [newspaper-online]; available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/29/AR2007112901813.html>; Internet; accessed 30 November 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Telephone interview with Lt Col Kendall and DoD News Briefing. Additionally, these points were reinforced during a press briefing in the Pentagon Briefing Room. Although Nicaragua, Haiti, Dominican Republic, the Philippines, etc show otherwise General Conway did not see long-term presence in another nation as a Marine role. In this interview he stated "At some point when you get to the number of forces that will provide the long-term security to Iraq, those become sustainment forces or forces that – occupation is not the right word here – but the long-term security forces. That's not a Marine function. That's not what Marines do for the country. We're expeditionary, and we do not get engaged in some of the long-term duties that you see in Germany or in Japan or in Korea. We are much more mobile than that, and we want to keep that mobility and that flexibility and not get tied down...with regard to some of these thoughts, we just don't see those type of duties as a Marine function. We're not equipped or trained to do those things." General James T. Conway, "DoD News Briefing with Gen. Conway from the Pentagon Briefing Room," 5 December 2007, Arlington, VA, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4101>; Internet; accessed 7 December 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Otto Kreisher, "Army Chief Says Troops Strained, Calls Pace 'Unsustainable'" *National Journal's Congress Daily*, 5 December 2007 [journal-online]; available from <http://www.ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20071205565482.html>; Internet; accessed 7 December 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Burgess.

<sup>38</sup> On the record, one retired Army general stated, "There is concern [among Army officers] that we're overplaying the Marines' assertion that they're the masters of counterinsurgency and they might be trying to export that into Afghanistan." Naylor.

<sup>39</sup> Conway.

<sup>40</sup> Burgess.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Conway.

<sup>43</sup> Naylor.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Sean D Naylor, "Generals in Joint Staff, Army Skeptical of Corps Takeover in Afghanistan," *The Military Times*, 22 October 2007 [newspaper-online]; available at <http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?t=55398>; Internet; accessed on 1 November 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Army and Air Forces have been engaged with a variety of coalition forces engaged in the Balkans since the mid-1990s. Examples include the Implementation Force (IFOR), Stabilization Force (SFOR), Kosovo Force (KFOR), and United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

<sup>47</sup> Admiral Michael G. Mullen, “*New Chairman Lays Out Top Priorities*,” 25 October 2007, available from [http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2007/1026\\_mullens/](http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2007/1026_mullens/); Internet; accessed 31 October 2007. Also see further explanations in Admiral Michael G. Mullen’s speech to the Center for a New American Security at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. This was his first public speech after becoming CJCS. John J. Kruzel, “Mullen Pledges Best Effort to Prevent Forces From Breaking,” *Armed Forces New Service* [newspaper-online], 26 October 2007; available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=47946>; Internet; accessed 27 October 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Mullen lecture at U.S. Army War College, 28 November 2007. This was also reiterated in Jim Garamone, “*Chairman Says Possible Build Up in Afghanistan Could Have Major Impact*,” *Armed Forces Information Service*, 11 January 2008 [newspaper-online]; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2008/01/mil-080111-afps05.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 January 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Garamone.

<sup>50</sup> “*Retired Marine General James Jones Warns Afghanistan May Become Failed State*,” 1 February 2008, available from <http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/index.cfm/Page/Article/ID/9262>; Internet; accessed 2 February 2008.

<sup>51</sup> The risk, according to the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Duncan Hunter, was captured in a letter to General Conway dated 12 October 2007. He argues, “the MEF must be available to meet unexpected contingencies. Embedding Marines in Afghanistan will reduce the inventory of America’s rapid response forces that are immediately available for such contingency operations.”

<sup>52</sup> Assuming the force in Afghanistan grows to a MEB, this translates into one ninth of the Marine Corps resulting in a 1:3 dwell. This mission and suggested force strength fit into the newest Marine Corps concept for the enduring mission of security cooperation. “*The Long War—Send in the Marines: A Marine Corps Operational Concept to Meet an Uncertain Security Environment*.”

<sup>53</sup> Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. And trans., *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 119.

